



## Monaco

### International Religious Freedom Report 2008

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. The Government denies permission to operate to religious organizations it regards as "sects."

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

#### Section I. Religious Demography

The principality has an area of 0.8 square miles and a population of 35,000. Catholicism is the state religion, and most of the approximately 7,200 citizens adhere to that faith, at least nominally. There were five Catholic churches in the principality, in addition to a cathedral. An archbishop presides over the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Monaco. Protestantism is the next most practiced religion, with two churches. There is also one Greek Orthodox church and one synagogue. The Constitution provides the 28,000 noncitizen residents the same religious freedom as citizens. Most noncitizens also adhere to either Catholicism or Protestantism, although there are some who practice Judaism, Islam, or other religious beliefs. There are 1,000 Jewish noncitizen residents. There are no mosques.

#### Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

##### Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion; however, there are some restrictions. The Government does not have an official list of banned "sects" but denies registration to groups labeled as such by the Inter-ministerial Monitoring Mission against Sectarian Abuses (MIVILUDES) of France. Any request to set up an association or hold a meeting from a group on this list is denied.

Catholicism is the state religion and Catholic ritual generally plays an important role in state festivities, such as the annual national day celebration and significant events in the life of the ruling family.

##### Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Government generally respected religious freedom in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the Government during the period covered by this report.

There is no law against proselytizing by religious organizations that are registered formally by the Ministry of State. The Government reports that it neither received nor denied requests for registration of groups on the MIVILUDES "cult" list during the period covered by this report. However, the Government stated that if such

requests were made, they would be denied.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees in the principality.

#### Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

#### Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious belief or practice. There is an active ecumenical movement. Religious leaders of various denominations periodically participate in joint religious services and cultural events to promote greater understanding and mutual tolerance among different confessions. Representatives of all religious groups are invited to participate in state celebrations in the Cathedral of Monaco.

#### Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

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